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CEBohlen
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POSSIBLE SOVIET REACTIONS TO THE FOLLOWING ALTERNATIVES:

1. Air Strike. Without any political notification, if the strike was a one-time affair, was in general successful, and completely over before there would be any chance for reaction, it is probable that the Soviets would confine themselves to political action in the United Nations, propaganda, and attempt to exploit any divisions which might appear in the Western Alliance. They might conceivably take some action in Berlin, but would be unlikely to initiate any form of military action.
2. Communication with Khrushchev and following negative reply, air strike as in 1. Soviet reaction would depend, to some degree, upon positions Khrushchev took in his reply. Assuming a completely negative reply, i. e., a denial that MRBM bases were under construction in Cuba, which conceivably might indicate a physical retreat from the construction of these bases -- which we could only ascertain through photographic reconnaissance -- or he might, in his reply, take a very tough line, drawing the analogy between our bases in Greece and Italy and the Soviet bases in Cuba, he might threaten general nuclear war in the event of any United States action. If such were the reply, the situation would obviously become more dangerous, although it would not be conclusive evidence of Soviet willingness to respond militarily to an air strike. We would have to wait to judge the temper, as well as the text of his reply.
3. With or without political soundings to initiate larger strike, which would, in all probability, entail expansion into an invasion. From the point of view of Soviet reaction, this would probably be the most dangerous course of action which we could take. An expanded operation against Cuba would no longer be merely to eliminate the MRBM bases and would confront the Soviets with a series of very difficult choices. It is possible that limited military action against some of our NATO bases or direct action in Berlin might be the Soviet response.
4. A political communication to Khrushchev following in the event of a negative reply, by a declaration of war and the institution of a blockade of Cuba. While there can be no certainty in any of these

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estimates of Soviet reaction, there is a very good chance that the Soviets would confine themselves only to action in the United Nations propaganda, etc., and not institute any military action under this course of action.

The foregoing analyses deal only with probable Soviet reactions and do not deal with the general effect on the United States position throughout the world.

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